

Message Text

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44

ACTION AF-06

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R 080826Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3565

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

UNCLAS PRETORIA 0078

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SF PINT

SUBJECT: LEBOWA: RAMUSI MAKES HIS MOVE

REF: 75 PRETORIA 2850

1. FIVE MONTHS AFTER BEING KICKED OUT OF THE LEBOWA HOMELAND CABINET (REFTEL) EX-MINISTER OF INTERIOR COLLINS RAMUSI HAS PUBLICLY MOVED TO UNSEAT HIS ERSTWHILE POLITICAL MATE, LEBOWAN CHIEF MINISTER DR CEDRIC PHATUDI.

2. AT POST-CHRISTMAS CONGRESS OF LEBOWA PEOPLES PARTY (LPP) ATTENDED SOLELY BY HIS SUPPORTERS, RAMUSI WAS ELECTED TO REPLACE PHATUDI AS PARTY LEADER. PHATUDI AND HIS SUPPORTERS CLAIM RAMUSI'S CONGRESS ILLEGAL AND THAT PHATUDI REMAINS LEGITIMATE LPP HEAD.

3. BATTLE WILL PROBABLY BE JOINED AT MARCH MEETING OF LEBOWAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY WHEN RAMUSI IS EXPECTED TO CHALLENGE PHATUDI'S RIGHT TO CONTINUE AS CPEF MINISTER. DIFFICULT TO ESTIMATE STRENGTH OF OPPOSING SIDES, BUT, AS IN ALL HOMELANDS, NOTORIOUSLY MALLEABLE CHIEFS WHO SERVE AS APPOINTED MEMBERS OF ASSEMBLY WILL CAST DECIDING VOTES. (IN 100 MEMBER ASSEMBLY CHIEF NUMBER ELECTED MPS 60-40)

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4. KEZBL

EST IS FORMER CHIEF MINISTER CHIEF M.
MATLALA WHOM PHATUDI DEFEATED IN 1973. PRIOR TO AXING OF
RAMUSI FROM CABINET, MATLALA HAD DISSOLVED HIS LEBOWA
NATIONAL PARTY AND PLEDGED HIS SUPPORT TO PHATUDI. HOWEVER,
INFORMED SOURCES CONTEND THAT MATLALA COULD NOW GO EITHER
WAY, OR MORE LIKELY ATTEMPT TO REGAIN CHIEF MINISTERSHIP
FOR HIMSELF WHILE RAMUSI AND PHATUDI FORCES FIGHT IT OUT.

5. COMMENT: RAMUSI AND PHATUDI ARE NOT IDEOLOGICAL
ENEMIES. BOTH ARE ADAMANTLY OPPOSED TO " SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT".
BUT RAMUSI HAS ALWAYS BEEN MORE WILLING TO ATTACK THE SAG PUBLICLY.
(IN JAN 6 SPEECH OPENING THE CONGRESS OF (COLORED) LABOR
PARTY IN UPINGTON RAMUSI DAMNED SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT AS
UNWORKABLE AND CALLED ON PRIME MINISTER VORSTER TO RELEASE
ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS, AND ALL BANNING ORDERS AND ALLOW
ALL EXILES TO RETURN HOME.) SHOULD RAMUSI GAIN CHIEF
MINISTERSHIP, RELATIONS BETWEEN SAG AND LEBOWA ALMOST
CERTAINLY LIKELY TO DETERIORATE. SHOULD RAMUSI AND PHATUDI
CANCEL EACH OTHER OUT, AND MATLALA EMERGE AS CHIEF MINISTER,
HE MIGHT WELL BE ANOTHER CANDIDATE TO FOLLOW MATANZIMA AND
MANGOPE ON THE ROAD TO " INDEPENDENCE".
BOWDLER

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